

Weston Town Committee for the Oversight of the Lachat Property

MINUTES

March 4, 2014

Present: Committee Members: Ellen McCormick (chair), Amy Kalafa, Michelle Fracasso, Carol Baldwin, Nicholas Bell, Judy Saffan, Paul Deysenroth (Guests: Selectwoman Gayle Weinstein, Selectman Dennis Tracey; Margaret Wirtenberg)

Presided By: Ellen McCormick,

Meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m.

- A. **Minutes** approved: Paul made a motion, seconded by Amy to approve the Minutes of 2/4/14. Motion carried unanimously.

B. **Discussion with Selectmen Weinstein and Tracey:**

1. GVI: Selectwoman Weinstein described recent conversations with Dan Levine of Green Village Initiative (GVI) about their pledge of \$75,000 for the farm project. In a following discussion, Selectman Tracey asked what role GVI would like to play and Amy, who is on the GVI Board, said that they would like to provide a start up role, and create a suburban farm model that could be replicated.

2. Governance: The Selectmen suggested that an appointed Town Commission be named to govern Lachat. This Commission would report to the Board of Selectmen. The Selectmen suggested that this form of governance of the town farm at Lachat (vs., for example, an independent non-profit) would insure community input and responsibility to the Town. The Selectmen suggested the Commission be made up of 7 to 9 individuals representing a range of interests, and include a lawyer. The new Commission would begin their work as soon as the plan for the property has been approved. Nick suggested the Commission include a neighbor to the property. In addition to the Commission, the Selectmen suggested that there be a Board of Advisors that would be non-voting but could offer their expertise as local farmers, a GVI member, etc. Additionally, Friends of Lachat could remain as a fund-raising organization in a similar way as the relationship between the Town Library and Friends of the Library. The Selectmen suggested that the treasurer for the Lachat Town Farm effort should be Town staff member, Finance Director, Rick Darling.

3. Farmer employment: The Selectmen suggested the farmer/caretaker could be a Town employee.

4. Property clean up and maintenance: Margaret asked how this would be managed. Gayle said that requests should come through her office or Town Administrator's, Tom Landry. Gayle said there is currently \$130,000 in the Lachat endowment earnings fund that is earmarked for building and property maintenance.

5. Tenant: Gayle will meet with property tenant, Liz Ward, to discuss upcoming changes to the use of the property.

6. Signage: A logo and branding for the Farm is being created. The Town will be pay for the signage with prior approval of design and costs. The Selectmen reiterated that the sign must include mention of the Juliana Lachat Preserve, as per Leon Lachat's wishes upon deeding the property to the Town.

7. Farm to School Grant: Amy discussed the upcoming deadline for this grant. Gayle said Amy needs to meet with the Superintendent of the Weston schools to discuss.

- C. **Conservation Committee Approval Process:** On March 8, there will be a site walk of the property. Ellen McCormick will represent the Committee at the walk and a LandTech representative will be present. The follow-up meeting with the Conservation Committee will take place March 20- Committee members should plan to attend.
- D. **Restoration Progress:** Carol will be meeting with architect Bob Hatch to discuss next steps in the restoration, which may include replacing the HVAC system. The Commission discussed options and the desire to make the house a model of sustainability. Ellen will ask Dave Gengo of Salem Preservation, who is working on the restoration, to take photos to document the restoration process. Deirdre Doran will be writing a series of columns for the paper updating the public on the restoration.
- E. **Kiwanis:** Projects for Kiwanis need to be identified. Paul Deysenroth will help interface with Kiwanis.
- F. **Fund raising:** Michelle is working on the idea of some pop-up farm to table events in April, May, and June as fundraisers. A fundraising thermometer to be hung on the Onion Barn was suggested. Margaret also suggested widely publicizing the launch of Lachat Town Farm. Ellen suggested a "Wish List" be created for possible donations. Judy suggested restaurant events that would offer a percentage of the evening's profits as a donation.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD AT 7:30pm ON TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2014.

(Minutes submitted by Carol Baldwin)